Frequently Asked Questions Regarding Gangs

1. What is a youth gang?

There is no single, accepted nationwide definition of youth gangs. It has been firmly established that the characteristics and behaviors of gangs are exceptionally varied within and across geographical areas (Egley, Howell, and Major, 2006; Klein, 2002; Weisel, 2002) and that a community's gang problem—however affected from other areas—is primarily and inherently homegrown. Thus, state and local jurisdictions tend to develop their own definitions. The terms "youth gang" and "street gang" are often used interchangeably, but use of the latter label can result in the confusion of youth gangs with adult criminal organizations. A youth gang is commonly thought of as a self-formed association of peers having the following characteristics: three or more members, generally ages 12 to 24; a name and some sense of identity, generally indicated by such symbols as style of clothing, graffiti, and hand signs; some degree of permanence and organization; and an elevated level of involvement in delinquent or criminal activity.

2. What community conditions enable youth gangs to take root?

In detailing the transition from typical adolescent groupings to established youth gangs, Moore (1998) outlines four community conditions that often precede this transition. First, conventional socializing agents, such as families and schools, are largely ineffective and alienating. Under these conditions, conventional adult supervision is largely absent. Second, the adolescents must have a great deal of free time that is not consumed by other prosocial roles. Third, for the gang to become established—if not fully institutionalized across generations—members must have limited access to appealing conventional career lines, that is, good adult jobs. Finally, the young people must have a place to congregate—usually a well-defined neighborhood.

3. Is the youth gang problem growing?

The number of cities and counties experiencing youth gang problem increased substantially between the mid-1980s and mid-1990s (Miller, 2001). Based on the 2004 National Youth Gang Survey (NYGS) results, it is estimated that 29 percent of the jurisdictions that city (populations of 2,500 or more) and county law enforcement agencies serve experienced youth gang problems. Moreover, in the 2004 NYGS, it is estimated that youth gangs were active in more than 2,900 jurisdictions served by city and county law enforcement agencies (Egley and Ritz, 2006).

Gang activity is notably prevalent in the largest cities (population over 100,000) in the United States—over 90 percent reported gang activity in each year between 1996 and 2003 (Egley et al., 2006). Overall, from the 1996-1998 and 1999-2001 survey periods, the average percentage of agencies that reported gang problems declined across larger

cities (population 50,000 or more), suburban counties, smaller cities (populations 2,500 to 49,999) and rural counties (Egley and Ritz, 2006). Compared with the 1999-2001 survey period, in the 2002-2004 survey period the average percentage of agencies that reported gang problems was slightly higher in smaller and larger cities, slightly lower in rural counties, and virtually unchanged in suburban counties. Also, 53 percent of the responding agencies indicated their youth gang problem was "getting better" or "staying about the same" in 2004 as compared with 2003, and 47 percent said it was "getting worse", an increase of 5 percentage points over the previous year. Gang problems have also been documented in Indian country (Major et al., 2004).

4. Is a new wave of gang activity developing in the United States?

Youth gang activity tends to follow a cyclical pattern with upswings followed by downturns (Klein, 1995a), and these occur at multiple levels—within regions, cities, and neighborhoods (Egley et al., 2004). To illustrate, the largest cities reported persistent gang problems from 1996 to 2002 in the NYGS; in contrast, smaller cities and suburban and rural counties tended to report variable gang problems during this period (Egley et al., 2004; see also, Egley, 2002). Some cities may experience a large and sudden flare-up in gang violence in a given year. Such upswings are typically local in nature and not indicative of a nationwide trend (Tita and Abrahamse, 2004). Further complicating matters, local officials may be reluctant to acknowledge their gang problem until it publicly surfaces in a tragic event, or they may declare they have successfully dealt with it, only to see it surface again.

5. Are youth gang homicides increasing?

Due to numerous issues surrounding gang crime data, there is no simple response to this question (see Maxson, Curry, and Howell, 2002, for further discussion). First, there is the issue of availability—or lack thereof—of gang crime data. Most law enforcement agencies report they do not regularly record criminal offenses as "gang-related," and those that do most often only do so for violent offenses (Egley and Major, 2003). Second, agencies employ varying criteria for recording a crime as "gang-related" (Egley et al., 2006). Broadly speaking, some agencies record a crime as "gang-related" when it involves a gang member as either a perpetrator or victim; other agencies use a more narrow approach and record a crime as "gang-related" only when the motive behind the crime furthers the interest and activities of the gang. Third and consequently, the term "gang homicide" often subsumes lethal outcomes involving such diverse sources, for example, as gang rivalries, drug market participation, solitary crimes involving individual gang members, or arguments between acquaintances, such that there is characteristically no single gang homicide problem but rather many gang homicide problems (see Tita and Abrahamse, 2004).

With the above caveats in mind, it is also important to note that most gang-problem areas do not report experiencing gang-related homicides. Over the 2002–2003 survey period, more than two-thirds of the jurisdictions reporting gang problems in the NYGS did not report a gang-related homicide, including 87 percent of the rural counties and 88 percent

of the smaller cities experiencing gang problems (Egley, 2005). In contrast, approximately two-thirds of cities with populations of 250,000 or more and one-third of cities with populations between 100,000 and 249,999 reported an annual high of three or more gang homicides in the same time period. Simply stated, reports of gang-related homicides are concentrated mostly in the largest cities in the United States, where there are long-standing and persistent gang problems and a greater number of documented gang members—most of whom are identified by law enforcement as young adults. Furthermore, the number of gang homicides reported by cities with populations of 100,000 or more increased 34 percent from 1999 to 2003 (Curry, 2004).

6. Is gang migration a common problem?

The expanded presence of gangs is often blamed on the relocation of members from one city to another, typically referred to as "gang migration." However, the sudden appearance of Rollin' 60s Crips graffiti in a public park in a rural community, for example, does not necessarily mean that the Los Angeles gang has set up a chapter in the community (Starbuck, Howell, and Lindquist, 2001). Gang names are frequently copied, adopted, or passed on. In most instances, there is little, if any, real connection between local groups with the same name other than the name itself.

Although gang migration is stereotypically attributed to illegal activities such as drug franchising, research has consistently demonstrated that the expansion of criminal enterprises is not the principal driving force behind migration (Maxson, 1998). The most common reasons for migration are social considerations affecting individual gang members, including family relocation to improve the quality of life or to be near relatives and friends. Moreover, in the 2004 NYGS, a majority (60 percent) of respondents reported no or few (less than 25 percent of documented gang members) such migrants. Agencies that experienced the highest levels of gang-member migration were significantly more likely to report migration for social reasons (Egley and Ritz, 2006).

7. What factors contributed to the proliferation of youth gang activity in the 1980s and 1990s?

While many factors have been suggested, three of the most widely discussed are (1) communitywide social and economic conditions, including such interrelated factors as deindustrialization, the loss of employment opportunities, and poverty, racism, and the growth of the urban underclass; (2) diffusion of the gang culture into the general population, particularly through the popular media; and (3) involvement in the crack cocaine market (further discussed below) (Klein, 2002). It is important to keep in mind that most youth gangs are homegrown and that the factors which contribute to the emergence of gang activity in a community are not necessarily the same as those which contribute to its persistence (Klein, 1995b).

8. Are youth gangs involved in organized crime?

The “gang” characterization is sometimes broadly extended to mean terrorist gang, prison gang, or criminal gang as in organized crime, and “in each of these instances, the word ‘gang’ implies a level of structure and organization for criminal conspiracy that is simply beyond the capacity of most street gangs” (Klein, 2004: 57). To remain in business, organized crime groups such as drug cartels must have strong leadership, codes of loyalty, severe sanctions for failure to abide by these codes, and a level of entrepreneurial expertise that enables them to accumulate and invest proceeds from drug sales (p. 58). In contrast, “most street gangs are only loosely structured, with transient leadership and membership, easily transcended codes of loyalty, and informal rather than formal roles for the members” (p. 59). Very few youth gangs meet the essential criteria for classification as “organized crime” (see also Decker, Bynum, and Weisel, 1998; Weisel, 2002).

Because the growth in youth gang violence in the period from the mid-1980s to the early 1990s coincided with the crack cocaine epidemic, these two developments were generally perceived to be interrelated (Klein, 1995b). However, youth gangs rarely manage or control drug distribution systems at the organizational level; rather, their involvement is mainly in street-level distribution (Howell and Decker, 1999). Most drug distribution systems are managed by adult drug cartels or syndicates, traditional narcotic operatives, and other adult criminal organizations (Howell, 2003). However, youth gangs can be integrally involved and susceptible to involvement in existing, adult-based distribution systems without actually evidencing the characteristics of a drug-dealing gang (Valdez and Sifaneck, 2004).

There is no question that in particular communities in certain cities, youth gangs are very active in drug trafficking. However, the common stereotypes of the relationships between youth gangs, drug trafficking, and violence are often sensationalized (Klein, 1995b; Moore, 1993). While gang participation, drug trafficking, and violence tend to occur together, they are not a single, comprehensive problem (Braga, 2004). Where drug-related violence occurs, it mainly stems from drug use and dealing by individual gang members and from gang member involvement in adult criminal drug distribution networks more than from drug-trafficking activities of the youth gang as an organized entity.

9. Are today’s youth gangs different from gangs in the past?

Some of the gangs that have emerged in the past decade are noticeably different from those that emerged before the mid-1980s (Howell, Egley, and Gleason, 2002; Howell, Moore, and Egley, 2002). These gangs are commonly described as having a “hybrid gang culture,” meaning they do not follow the same rules or methods of operation, making documentation and categorization difficult (Starbuck et al., 2001). They may have several of the following characteristics: a mixture of racial/ethnic groups, a mixture of symbols and graffiti associated with different gangs, wearing colors traditionally associated with a rival gang, less concern over turf or territory, and members who sometimes switch from one gang to another. Members of contemporary gangs often “cut and paste” bits of Hollywood images and big-city gang lore into their local versions of gangs. Small town

and rural gangs also differ from urban gangs in other important respects (Howell, Egley, and Gleason, 2002), hence urban models of gang development and response do not necessarily apply in rural areas (Weisheit and Wells, 2004).

10. What proportion of adolescents join gangs?

In a 1998 national school survey, 7 percent of boys and 4 percent of girls said they had belonged to a gang in the past 12 months (Gottfredson and Gottfredson, 2001). A survey of nearly 6,000 eighth graders conducted in 11 cities (that were known gang-problem localities) found that 11 percent were currently gang members (17 percent said they had belonged to a gang at some point in their young lives) (Esbensen and Deschenes, 1998). It should also be noted that the prevalence of youth gang membership varies by locality and is typically higher in areas with longer-standing gang problems. Thus, gang membership is yet higher among representative samples of high-risk youth in large cities, ranging from 14 percent to 30 percent in Denver, Colorado; Seattle, Washington; and Rochester, New York (Thornberry, 1998; Thornberry, Huizinga, and Loeber, 2004). Sixty-seven percent of gang members identified by law enforcement agencies in the 2001 NYGS were ages 18 and older (Egley et al., 2006).

11. What is the racial and ethnic composition of youth gangs?

According to the 2001 NYGS respondents, nearly half (49 percent) of all gang members are Hispanic/Latino, 34 percent are African American/black, 10 percent are Caucasian/white, 6 percent are Asian, and the remainder are of some other race/ethnicity (Egley et al., 2006). However, the racial composition of gangs varies considerably by locality. The newest gang-problem areas (i.e., emergence within the past decade) report, on average, a larger proportion of Caucasian/white gang members than any other racial/ethnic group (Howell, Egley, and Gleason, 2002). In short, the demographic composition of gangs is an extension of the characteristics of the larger community.

12. Is female gang involvement increasing?

Youth gang membership among girls is much more common (Moore and Hagedorn, 2001) and is documented more widely by law enforcement (Egley et al., 2006) than in the past. During early adolescence, roughly one-third of all youth gang members are female (Esbensen and Winfree, 1998; Gottfredson and Gottfredson, 2001), but studies show that females leave the gang at an earlier age than males (Gottfredson and Gottfredson, 2001; Thornberry, Krohn, Lizotte, et al., 2003). Gender-mixed gangs are also more commonly reported now than in the past. In 2000, 42 percent of all gang-problem jurisdictions in the NYGS reported that a majority of their gangs had female members (Egley et al., 2006). Furthermore, emerging research has also documented that the gender composition of the gang is importantly associated with gang delinquency rates. In one study, females in all- or majority-female gangs exhibited the lowest delinquency rates, and males and females in majority-male gangs exhibited the highest delinquency rates (including higher rates than males in all-male gangs) (Peterson, Miller, and Esbensen, 2001).

13. What proportion of serious and violent crime is attributable to gang members?

Studies of large urban samples show that gang members are responsible for a large proportion of all violent offenses committed during the adolescent years. Rochester gang members (30 percent of the sample) self-reported committing 68 percent of all adolescent violent offenses; in Seattle, gang members (15 percent of the sample) self-reported committing 85 percent of adolescent robberies; and in Denver, gang members (14 percent of the sample) self-reported committing 79 percent of all serious violent adolescent offenses (Thornberry, 1998; Thornberry et al., 2004).

14. Is gun usage a common form of gang violence?

The use of firearms is a major feature of gang violence. Gang members are far more likely than other delinquents to carry guns and to use them. In the 2000 NYGS, 84 percent of the gang-problem jurisdictions reported at least one occurrence of firearm use by one or more gang members in an assault crime (Egley and Arjunan, 2002). In a Rochester, New York, study, the rate of gun carrying was about ten times higher for gang members than it was for non-gang juvenile offenders (Thornberry et al., 2003). Gang members who owned and/or carried guns also committed about ten times more violent crimes than one would expect from their numbers in the sample population.

15. What is the impact of gang membership on individual offending levels?

Gang membership is a strong predictor of individual violence in adolescence and, in one study, has been observed to be an even more powerful predictor than two of the most highly regarded factors (i.e., delinquent peer association and prior violence) (Thornberry, 1998; see also Battin-Pearson et al., 1998). Survey research has consistently demonstrated that youth are significantly more criminally active during periods of active gang membership, particularly in serious and violent offenses, and that prolonged periods of gang involvement have a way of increasing the “criminal embeddedness” of members (Thornberry et al., 2003; Thornberry et al., 2004). “Associates” of gang members also have elevated offense rates (Curry, Decker, and Egley, 2002).

16. What are the major risk factors for gang membership?

Risk factors that predispose many youths to gang membership are also linked to a variety of adolescent problem behaviors, including serious violence and delinquency. The major risk factor domains are individual characteristics, family conditions, school experiences and performance, peer group influences, and the community context. Risk factors predictive of gang membership include prior and/or early involvement in delinquency, especially violence and alcohol/drug use; poor family management and problematic parent-child relations; low school attachment and achievement and negative labeling by teachers; association with aggressive peers and peers who engage in delinquency; and neighborhoods in which large numbers of youth are in trouble and in which drugs and firearms are readily available (Howell and Egley, 2005; see also Esbensen, 2000; Hill,

Lui, and Hawkins, 2001; Thornberry, 1998; Wyrick and Howell, 2004). The accumulation of risk factors greatly increases the likelihood of gang involvement, just as it does for other problem behaviors. The presence of risk factors in multiple risk-factor domains appears to increase the likelihood of gang involvement even more (Thornberry et al., 2003). A complete enumeration of risk factors for juvenile delinquency and gang involvement and data indicators can be accessed at the National Youth Gang Center Web site (http://www.iir.com/nygc/tool/).

17. How do youths become involved in and leave a gang?

The notion that youth are primarily, if not exclusively, actively recruited into the gang by older members is often circulated in the general public. However, systematic research continuously fails to support this view. Among the various reasons youth give for joining a gang, the following are the two most commonly observed: (1) social reasons—youth join to be around friends and family members (especially siblings or cousins) already part of the gang and (2) protection—youth join for the presumed safety they believe the gang can afford (Decker and Van Winkle, 1996; Peterson et al., 2004; Thornberry et al., 2003). Also reported by youth, albeit far less frequently, are more instrumental reasons for joining a gang, such as drug selling or making money. Moreover, few youth, irrespective of race/ethnicity, report they have been forced or coerced to join the gang (Freng and Winfree, 2004; Peterson et al., 2004). In other studies, many adolescents reported they could refuse to join a gang without reprisal (Decker and Kempf-Leonard, 1991; Fleisher, 1995, 1998).

Two other issues that shed light on youths' participation in gangs are duration patterns of gang membership and the ways in which youth accomplish leaving the gang. Longitudinal research that follows the same subjects regularly over a long period of time provides the best measure of membership duration patterns. Only a few studies have examined gang membership longitudinally, but each of these has provided uniformly consistent evidence that youth gang membership patterns are very dynamic—most youth reported being in the gang for one year or less (Hill et al., 2001; Peterson et al., 2004; Thornberry et al., 2003; Thornberry et al., 2004). These longitudinal studies were conducted primarily in areas with emerging gang problems, and thus it is unknown how these compelling findings compare to chronic or long-standing gang-problem areas, which are more likely to contain multigenerational and/or more hierarchically structured gangs. However, field studies in Chicago (Howoritz, 1983) and Los Angeles (Moore, 1991), where these types of gangs are more likely to exist—some of which are intergenerational—provide some evidence of more long-term patterns of gang membership among youth.

In regards to the second issue, research has documented that former gang members, especially marginal and short-term ones, typically left the gang without complication or facing any serious consequences (Decker and Lauritsen, 2002; Decker and Van Winkle, 1996). However, for the more long-term and/or core members, the process of leaving the gang is likely to be more gradual and met with greater difficulty—particularly for youths in more highly organized gangs that have a firmer foothold in a community or

neighborhood. Other situational factors that make leaving the gang more difficult include greater dependence on or personal status in the group, continuing perceptions by others (e.g., rivals) that the person is a bona fide member of the gang, and the lack of viable lifestyle alternatives (that is, conventional pursuits such as employment opportunities). Further, more hierarchically structured gangs may threaten or enact certain sanctions for those wishing to leave the gang.

18. What are the consequences of gang membership?

Prolonged gang involvement is likely to take a heavy toll on youths' social development and life-course experiences. The gang acts as "a powerful social network" in constraining the behavior of members, limiting access to pro social networks and cutting individuals off from conventional pursuits (Thornberry et al., 2003; Thornberry et al., 2004). These effects of the gang tend to produce precocious, off-time, and unsuccessful transitions that bring disorder to the life course in a cascading series of difficulties, including school dropout, early parenthood, and unstable employment. For some gang members, the end result of this foreclosure of future opportunities is continued involvement in criminal activity throughout adolescence and into adulthood.

Despite the apparent popular belief among youth that joining a gang will afford protection, in reality the opposite is true. Youth are far more likely to be violently victimized while in a gang than when they are not (Peterson et al., 2004). This relationship holds irrespective of the primary reason for joining a gang (i.e., whether for protection or not). Furthermore, in two studies, involvement in gang fights more than doubled or tripled the odds of serious injury (Loeber, Kalb, and Huizinga, 2001).

19. What can be done about youth gangs?

Over reliance on one strategy or another is unlikely to produce fundamental changes in the scope and severity of a community's gang problem (Curry and Decker, 2003; Wyrick and Howell, 2004). A balance of prevention, intervention, and suppression strategies and programs is likely to be far more effective (see Esbensen, 2000). For example, the Gang Resistance Education And Training (G.R.E.A.T.) prevention program (http://www.great-online.org/) could serve youth in gang-problem areas, while an Intervention Team (National Youth Gang Center, 2002b) could work with active gang members, and a Gang Suppression Unit could target the most violent gangs and gang members.

The Comprehensive Gang Prevention, Intervention, and Suppression Model (Spergel, 1995) is a flexible framework that guides communities in developing and organizing such a continuum of programs and strategies. The National Youth Gang Center (NYGC) has developed an assessment protocol which any community can use to assess its gang problem and which guides development of a comprehensive, communitywide plan of gang prevention, intervention, and suppression (National Youth Gang Center, 2002a). Resource materials that assist communities in developing an action plan to implement the Comprehensive Gang Model are also available (National Youth Gang Center, 2002b). Information on promising and effective gang programs and strategies that address

specific risk factors among various age groups is also available at the NYGC Web site in the Gang Strategic Planning Tool (http://www.iir.com/nygc/tool/).

References:

Battin-Pearson, S. R., Thornberry, T. P., Hawkins, J. D., and Krohn, M. D. 1998. *Gang Membership, Delinquent Peers, and Delinquent Behavior*. Bulletin. Youth Gang Series. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. (Adobe PDF)

Braga, A. A. 2004. *Gun Violence Among Serious Young Offenders. Problem-Oriented Guides for Police*. Problem-Specific Guides Series. No. 23. Washington, DC: Office of Community Oriented Policing Services. (Adobe PDF)

Curry, G. D. 2004. "Youth Gang Homicide Trends in the National Youth Gang Survey," Report to the National Youth Gang Center, Tallahassee, FL.

Curry, G. D., and Decker, S. H. 2003. *Confronting Gangs: Crime and Community*, (2nd ed.), Los Angeles, CA: Roxbury.

Curry, G. D., Decker, S. H., and Egley, A., Jr. 2002. "Gang Involvement and Delinquency in a Middle School Population," *Justice Quarterly*, 19(2), 275-292.

Decker, S. H., Bynum, T. S., and Weisel, D. L. 1998. "Gangs as Organized Crime Groups: A Tale of Two Cities," *Justice Quarterly*, 15, 395-423.

Decker, S. H., and Kempf-Leonard, K. 1991. "Constructing Gangs: The Social Definition of Youth Activities," *Criminal Justice Policy Review*, 5, 271-291.

Decker, S. H., and Lauritsen, J. L. 2002. "Breaking the Bonds of Membership: Leaving the Gang." In C. R. Huff (Ed.), *Gangs in America III* (pp. 103-122), Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

Decker, S. H., and Van Winkle, B. 1996. *Life in the Gang: Family, Friends, and Violence*, New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Egley, A., Jr. 2000. *Highlights of the 1999 National Youth Gang Survey*. Fact Sheet #2000-20. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. (Adobe PDF)

Egley, A., Jr. 2002. *National Youth Gang Survey Trends from 1996 to 2000*. Fact Sheet #2002-03. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. (Adobe PDF)

Egley, A., Jr. 2005. *Highlights of the 2002-2003 National Youth Gang Surveys*. Fact Sheet #2005-01. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. (Adobe PDF)

Egley, A., Jr., and Arjunan, M. 2002. *Highlights of the 2000 National Youth Gang Survey*. Fact Sheet #2002-04. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. (Adobe PDF)

Egley, A., Jr., Howell, J. C., and Major, A. K. 2004. "Recent Patterns of Gang Problems in the United States: Results From the 1996-2002 National Youth Gang Surveys." In F. A. Esbensen, S. G. Tibbetts, and L. Gaines (Eds.), *American Youth Gangs at the Millennium* (pp. 90-108), Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press, Inc.

Egley, A., Jr., Howell, J.C., and Major, A. K. 2006. *National Youth Gang Survey: 1999-2001*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. (Adobe PDF)

Egley, A., Jr., and Major, Aline K. 2003. *Highlights of the 2001 National Youth Gang Survey*. Fact Sheet #2003-01. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. (Adobe PDF)
Egley, A., Jr., and Major, Aline K. 2004. *Highlights of the 2002 National Youth Gang Survey*. Fact Sheet #2004-01. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. (Adobe PDF)
Egley, A., Jr., and Ritz, Christina E. 2006. *Highlights of the 2004 National Youth Gang Survey*. Fact Sheet #2006-01. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. (Adobe PDF)
Esbensen, F. A. 2000. *Preventing Adolescent Gang Involvement*. Youth Gang Series. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. (Adobe PDF)
Esbensen, F. A., and Deschenes, E. P. 1998. "A Multisite Examination of Gang Membership: Does Gender Matter?" *Criminology*, 36(4), 799-827.
Esbensen, F. A., and Winfree, L. T., Jr. 1998. "Race and Gender Differences Between Gang and Non-Gang Youth: Results From a Multi-Site Survey." *Justice Quarterly*, 15, 505-525.
Fleisher, M. S. 1995. *Beggars and Thieves: Lives of Urban Street Criminals*, Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press.
Fleisher, M. S. 1998. *Dead End Kids: Gang Girls and the Boys They Know*, Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press.
Freng, A., and Winfree, L. T., Jr. 2004. "Exploring Race and Ethnic Differences in a Sample of Middle School Gang Members." In F. A. Esbensen, S. G. Tibbetts, and L. Gaines (Eds.), *American Youth Gangs at the Millennium* (pp. 142-162), Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press, Inc.
Gottfredson, G. D., and Gottfredson D. C. October 2001. *Gang Problems and Gang Programs in a National Sample of Schools*. Ellicott City, MD: Gottfredson Associates, Inc. http://www.gottfredson.com/gang.htm
Hill, K. G., Lui, C., and Hawkins, J. D. 2001. *Early Precursors of Gang Membership: A Study of Seattle Youth*. Bulletin. Youth Gang Series. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. (Adobe PDF)
Horowitz, R. 1983. *Honor and the American Dream*, New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.
Howell, J. C. 2003. *Preventing and Reducing Juvenile Delinquency: A Comprehensive Framework*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
Howell, J. C., and Decker, S. H. 1999. *The Youth Gangs, Drugs, and Violence Connection*. Bulletin. Youth Gang Series. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. (Adobe PDF)
Howell, J. C., and Egley, A., Jr. 2005. "Moving Risk Factors Into Developmental Theories of Gang Membership." *Youth Violence and Juvenile Justice*, 3(4), 334-354.
Howell, J. C., Egley, A., Jr., and Gleason, D. K. 2002. *Modern Day Youth Gangs*. Bulletin. Youth Gang Series. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. (Adobe PDF)
Howell, J. C., Moore, J. P., and Egley, A., Jr. 2002. "The Changing Boundaries of Youth Gangs." In C. R. Huff (Ed.), *Gangs in America III* (pp. 3-18), Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Klein, M. W. 1995a. “Street Gang Cycles.” In J. Q. Wilson and J. Petersilia (Eds.), *Crime* (pp. 217-236), San Francisco, CA: Institute for Contemporary Studies.
Klein, M. W. 1995b. *The American Street Gang*, New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
Klein, M. W. 2002. “Street Gangs: A Cross-National Perspective.” In C. R. Huff (Ed.), *Gangs in America III* (pp. 237-254), Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
Klein, M. W. 2004. *Gang Cop: The Words and Ways of Officer Paco Domingo*, Walnut Creek, CA: Alta Mira Press.
Loeber, R., Kalb, L., and Huizinga, D. 2001. *Juvenile Delinquency and Serious Injury Victimization*. Bulletin. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. (Adobe PDF)
Major, A. K., Egley, A., Jr., Howell, J. C., Mendenhall, B., and Armstrong, T. 2004. *Youth Gangs in Indian Country*. Bulletin. Youth Gang Series. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. (Adobe PDF)
Maxson, C. L. 1998. *Gang Members on the Move*. Bulletin. Youth Gang Series. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. (Adobe PDF)
Maxson, C. L., Curry, G. D., and Howell. J. C. 2002. “Youth Gang Homicides in the United States in the 1990s.” In W. Reed and S. Decker (Eds.), *Responding to Gangs: Evaluation and Research* (pp. 107-137), Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice. (Adobe PDF)
Miller, W. B. 2001. *The Growth of Youth Gang Problems in the United States: 1970-1998*. Report. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. (Adobe PDF) (Appendices—Adobe PDF)
Moore, J. W. 1991. *Going Down to the Barrio: Homeboys and Homegirls in Change*, Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.
Moore, J. W. 1993. “Gangs, Drugs, and Violence.” In S. Cummins and D. J. Monti, *Gangs* (pp. 27-46), Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
Moore, J. W. 1998. “Understanding Youth Street Gangs: Economic Restructuring and the Urban Underclass.” In M. W. Watts (Ed.), *Cross-Cultural Perspectives on Youth and Violence* (pp. 65-78), Stamford, CT: JAI.
Moore, J. W., and Hagedorn, J. M. 2001. *Female Gangs: A Focus on Research*. Bulletin. Youth Gang Series. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. (Adobe PDF)
National Youth Gang Center. 2000. *1998 National Youth Gang Survey*. Summary Report. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. (Adobe PDF)
National Youth Gang Center. 2002a. *A Guide to Assessing Your Community’s Youth Gang Problem*, Tallahassee, FL: National Youth Gang Center. http://www.iir.com/nygc/acgp/assessment.htm
National Youth Gang Center. 2002b. *Planning for Implementation*, Tallahassee, FL: National Youth Gang Center. http://www.iir.com/nygc/acgp/implementation.htm
Peterson, D., Miller, J., and Esbensen, F. 2001. “The Impact of Sex Composition on Gangs and Gang Delinquency,” *Criminology*, 39(2), 411-439.

Peterson, D., Taylor, T. J., and Esbensen, F. 2004. “Gang Membership and Violent Victimization,” *Justice Quarterly*, 21(4), 794-815.
Spergel, I. A. 1995. *The Youth Gang Problem*, New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
Starbuck, D., Howell, J. C., and Lindquist, D. J. 2001. *Hybrid and Other Modern Gangs*. Bulletin. Youth Gang Series. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. (Adobe PDF)
Thornberry, T. P. 1998. “Membership in Youth Gangs and Involvement in Serious and Violent Offending.” In R. Loeber and D. P. Farrington (Eds.), *Serious and Violent Juvenile Offenders: Risk Factors and Successful Interventions*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
Thornberry, T. P., Huizinga, D., and Loeber, R. 2004. “The Causes and Correlates Studies: Findings and Policy Implications,” *Juvenile Justice*, 10(1), 3-19. (Adobe PDF)
Thornberry, T. P., Krohn, M. D., Lizotte, A. J., Smith, C. A., and Tobin, K. 2003. *Gangs and Delinquency in Developmental Perspective*, New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
Tita, G., and Abrahamse, A. 2004 (February). *Gang Homicide in LA*, 1981-2001, Sacramento, CA: California Attorney General’s Office. (Adobe PDF)
Valdez, A., and Sifaneck, S. J. 2004. “Getting High and Getting By: Dimensions of Drug Selling Behaviors Among American Mexican Gang Members in South Texas,” *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency*, 41(1), 82-105.
Weisheit, R. A., and Wells, L. E. 2004. “Youth Gangs in Rural America,” *NIJ Journal*, 251, 2-6. (Adobe PDF)
Weisel, D. L. 2002. “The Evolution of Street Gangs: An Examination of Form and Variation.” In W. Reed and S. Decker (Eds.), *Responding to Gangs: Evaluation and Research* (pp. 25-65). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice. (Adobe PDF)
Wyrick, P. A., and Howell, J. C. (2004). “Strategic Risk-Based Response to Youth Gangs,” *Juvenile Justice*, 10(1), 20-29. (Adobe PDF)

Prepared by: James C. Howell, Ph.D., Senior Research Associate with the National Youth Gang Center, and Arlen Egley, Jr., Ph.D., Senior Research Associate with the National Youth Gang Center.